



"The desire for safety stands against every great and noble enterprise."  
—Tacitus

**27-Dec-02**

## **A Year of War**

Many column writers are taking a look back on 2002, applauding achievers and panning failures, rehashing the highs and the lows, and trying to gain some perspective on it all. When I look back on the last twelve months, all I see is "wars and rumors of wars" ([Matthew 24:6](#)).

The wars that most prominently come to mind are three: the aftermath of the Afghan war, the blowup in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the talk and preparations for the coming battle for Iraq. The press both here and abroad condemned President George W. Bush for his "Axis of Evil" remarks, portraying him to be the next Hitler or Napoleon, bloodthirsty and bestial, a hyper-hawk, a "War President." European governments moaned and griped about American unilateralism and warmongering, while letting the Bush administration know by back channels, "If you scratch our backs, we'll scratch yours."

America had its every-other-year political civil war, pitting tax-and-spend-and-talk Democrats against tax-cut-and-spend-and-go-to-war Republicans. This time around, the prize was control of the U.S. Senate with its power to approve or deny judicial nominations and to push or stall President Bush's

agenda. As we all know, the Republicans "won," and as soon as they did, they tripped and fumbled and goofed and misspoke away most of their winnings. We can lay at least some of the blame at the feet of ex-Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

This year also saw a war of words between Christians and Muslims. Franklin Graham, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and other preachers told the truth about Mohammed and Islam, and all they received for their honesty was a bashing in the media. They were not being tolerant and inclusive enough. Muslim clerics fought back on one hand with soothing words that Islam is a religion of [peace](#) and on the other with calls to further acts of war and terror against the Great [Satan](#). The icing on the cake was President Bush's celebration of Ramadan in the White House followed not too long thereafter by his celebration of Christian and Jewish holidays too.

But perhaps the worst war of 2002 flew under the radar of most folks. Ironically, it is "most folks" that the war was perpetrated against, and they are not even aware of how badly they have suffered. Yes, "most folks" go about their daily lives, and they seem to be unaffected by this horrible onslaught. Sadly, if one brings it to their attention, "most folks" may agree that it is unfortunate, but it is for the best, they justify. "We will get back all we've lost," they say in hope.

This secret war is the one waged by the U.S. government against its own citizens. It has appeared on the battlefield in various guises: as the Department of Homeland Security, as the federalized airport security screeners, as the Total Information Awareness program, as citizens reporting other citizens for suspicious behavior, etc. Freedoms long cherished by Americans have been whittled away day by day since September 11, 2001, in the name of security until the prospect of a police state or a declaration of martial law do not seem all that improbable anymore.

A recent column by Nicholas Monahan posted on [LewRockwell.com](#) illustrates the extent of the nascent police state. An air traveler has few rights and no recourse before the lofty security screener and his supervisor. A husband's complaining and raising his voice after a screener touched the sore breasts of his pregnant wife are grounds for charging him with a felony, holding him in a cell for hours, and banishing him from the airport for ninety

days. Add in a falsified incident report, colleagues and administrators covering for each other, and a bit of abuse by airport police, and an unflattering comparison with several historic repressive regimes come to mind.

It hurts to write it, but this country has sold its birthright for a bowl of stew ( [Genesis 25:29-34](#)). Trading our Constitutional freedoms for a little temporary security is a losing proposition. Once freedoms are gone, they cost even more to regain, and most of the time, their price is in blood. Our fathers, uncles, grandfathers, and many before them spilled rivers of blood to pass them down to us, and we are willing to give them up without a whimper so we can feel a little safer in our Gucci shoes while eating caviar at a five-star restaurant.

If Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, *et al.*, could see this, they would weep.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [The Right Use of Power](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Of all creation, man is the only creature made in God's image and given dominion over the rest of creation. When God breathed in the spirit of man (Genesis 2:7) to enable thinking, feeling, and creating, He imbued God-like characteristics, giving mankind the capability of subduing, controlling, and directing the rest of creation—a power not given to animals (Genesis 1:26, 28). With dominion comes responsibility to maintain (Genesis 2:15). The sad history of mankind shows that he has badly mismanaged his power, bringing about disease, war, and famine. Such people will be brought into account (Revelation 11:18). God's Spirit enables us to direct this power in a responsible, godly manner.

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## From the Archives: Featured Article

### [The Whirlpool of War](#)

by John O. Reid

John Reid, a veteran of the Korean war, knows the horrors of war. We are in a spiritual war right now, and it will only become hotter as we near the end!

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